

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION II

DATE: OCT 8 1987

SUBJECT: Arkansas Chemical Company, Discovery of Radiation in Lab

FROM: John M. Malool
Health and Safety Specialist

TO: Memo to File

On Wednesday, October 7, 1987, I received a call from Mark Pane, OSC at the Arkansas Chemical Co. removal action. He informed me that during the inventory and clean-up operation in one of the rooms used as a laboratory, the ERCS contractor discovered two (2) small containers of material labeled as "RADIOACTIVE".

OSC Pane indicated that all personnel had been withdrawn from the building and that assistance would be necessary.

John Malool, Health and Safety Specialist, responded to the Arkansas site.

Malool, Pane and Don Graham-TAT, discussed the survey methods to be implemented. The decision was made that the survey of the radioactive material would be done in Level B protective clothing. This decision was based upon the idea that since no prior radiation scan had been done, this entry would be similar to conducting an initial site survey. EPA requirements are that for initial site surveys dealing with unknown situations, Level B protective clothing shall be the minimum level of protection worn.

Prior to entry, background radiation levels were taken. The background for this location were found to be 0.01 mR/hour. An action level of 2 times background, in accordance with EPA recommended practices was established.

All members of the survey team donned their Level B protective clothing. Graham used a TAT beta/gamma indicator, while Malool used the Bicron Surveyor 2000 unit, Serial No. A288J, EPA Contol No. 403426. This unit is an alpha, beta, gamma detector. Pane served as the communications person, maintaining continuous radio contact with the Command Post during the survey operations.

Entry was made into the area containing the radioactive material. Two containers were noted. Both containers were small plastic boxes, each measuring approximately one inch high, 2 inches wide 6 inches long. Both were marked as containing radioactive material. Both indicated the material was the H3 isotope with a dose of 250 microrems. One package indicated that its date of manufacture was November 1970, with the other having June 1972 as its manufacture date.

No readings were observed during the survey, from either of the instruments used.



As no readings were obtained, it was decided that the material would be left on the site. The two containers were placed in a wooden box and put under a ventilating hood. The glass door to this hood was shut and sealed with duct tape.

All survey personnel exited the building to the decon area, where their protective clothing was removed. OSC Pane will contact Shawn Googins of the Radiation Control Branch, 26 Federal Plaza, for further assistance in the disposal of this material.

cc: G.H. Zachos